

Medical Education Online

- Description of the problem

- In recent years, the amount of medical graduates that opt for clinician scientist careers has been steadily declining. This has been a topic of discussion among many high ranking institutes. This paper reports on the findings of UCC's research program, focusing on students awareness of research activities at UCC, students perception of both research focused and transferrable skills, students motivation for research, and students personal views on doing research.

- Data collection

- A questionnaire was given to students to collect information. This questionnaire was adapted from a questionnaire that assessed research skills pertaining to zoology and ecology. The questionnaire was modified to fit the purpose of the research, and changed to take approximately 15 minutes to complete. After a test group, the questionnaire was modified further to add incremental improvements.

- Methods implemented

- All registered 1st - 4th year students were eligible to be surveyed. Final year medical students were not due to the change in curriculum. Descriptive statistics were gathered and results were grouped into lower and higher levels using equal cut-off points. The data underwent tests of normality, Mann-Whitney U tests for differences between perceived levels of competency, and T tests to examine levels of motivation for research.

- Results discussion

- Out of the 317 students surveyed, 85 were first years, 125 second years, 42 third years, 78 fourth year students, and 32 from the year 1 GEM class giving a response rate of 60%. The majority of students reported higher levels of competency in transferable skills such as independent / team based work. US/Canadian students rated substantially higher than others, but only when the GEM students were excluded from analysis.

- Conclusion

- UCC has found that there is a significant need for medical professors to implement research skills training in all aspects of medical curriculum. This will cause these skills to help undergraduates to see that they are indeed desirable and relevant. UCC also found that any opportunity to bring together research focused individuals must be considered.